

# 16 Sioux Sought by F.B.I. In the Slaying of 2 Agents

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PINE RIDGE, S.D., June 27 — More than 100 Federal Bureau of Investigation agents armed with automatic weapons and dressed in battle fatigues combed the prairies and hills of this Oglala Sioux reservation today in search of some 16 Indians they believed took part in the killing of two F.B.I. agents yesterday.

An F.B.I. spokesman said this afternoon that no suspects had been picked up.

[The Associated Press reported that an F.B.I. spokesman in Pine Ridge, Thomas Coll, had said that the bureau had brought in an armored personnel carrier, several military jeeps, a helicopter and a light airplane to use in the search.]

The killings and a subsequent shootout, as the F.B.I. described the sequence of events, occurred at an isolated collection of farm houses and

log cabins near the tiny town of Oglala in the northwest section of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, which is twice the size of Delaware. Not far away is the reservation town of Wounded Knee, where more than 100 Indians were massacred in 1890 and where militant Indians staged a take-over two years ago.

During the last six months, the Pine Ridge reservation has been beset by shootings, beatings and killings among its Sioux population. Since Jan. 1, eight Indians have been killed here. Some of the killings have been attributed to virulent antagonism between the militant American Indian Movement and Richard Wilson the tribal president.

According to the F.B.I. account of the latest incident, two agents thoroughly familiar

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with the reservation drove in individual cars at about 1 P.M. yesterday to the farmhouse with warrants for the arrest of four men.

The men were wanted in connection with an assault of a white man and his son earlier this week on the reservation. The two victims had earlier been released unharmed the F.B.I. said.

The farmhouses were known to reservation residents as a home and center for AIM followers. Townspeople said that everyone knew AIM supporters had lived in the enclave for months and had dug trenches around it.

According to the F.B.I., the two agents, Jack R. Coler and Ronald A. Williams, got out of their car and were immediately hit by automatic weapons and rifles fire.

However, a spokesman said, they were able to grab their car radios and call for help. Within 10 minutes, eight F.B.I. agents and two Bureau of Indian Affairs policemen from Pine Ridge, 16 miles away, arrived on the scene.

For the next six hours, there was sporadic gunfire between an undetermined number of Indians within the farmhouses and growing numbers of law enforcement officers, including state highway patrolmen.

## Tear Gas Used

not retrieve the bodies of the two agents during the intermittent shootings. Finally, late in the afternoon, the lawmen lobbed tear gas into the enclave. The Indians inside fled through a back door and escaped into the grassy buttes behind the houses. The F.B.I. said that they might have gotten away on horseback.

Left behind, dead, was an

Indian, tentatively identified as Joe Roberts, 18 years old, of Seattle. The F.B.I. said that Mr. Roberts wore an Army flack jacket stripped from one of the dead F.B.I. agents.

Spokesmen for the American Indian Movement have sharply questioned the F.B.I. account. They said that the young Indian might have been killed first by the agents, touching off the battle. They also suggested that the F.B.I. agents might have been shot accidentally by other law enforcement officers.

AIM spokesmen added that followers of the movement had been on the reservation in part to protect Dennis Banks, a movement leader, who was in the region to stand trial in nearby Custer on charges stemming from the Wounded Knee take-over in 1973.

William Kunstler, one of the

AIM attorneys, said in New York that Bureau of Indian Affairs policemen had threatened to kill one AIM member for each Government agent assaulted. He also charged that the houses neighboring the suspects' house in the Oglala area had been bullet-ridden and tear-gassed during the fight.

Throughout the night F.B.I. agents and weapons were airlifted and brought by bus to the reservation from Chicago, Denver, Omaha, Minneapolis and Quantico, Va.

Today, with the sun beating down on the rolling prairies and temperatures in the high 80's, the town of Pine Ridge looked like an armed camp. Groups of F.B.I. agents, accompanied by Indian bureau police, roamed the Oglala area in jeeps and small vans, veering off into wooded sections and back roads.

Some of those who had been up all night slept on the floor of the red brick Bureau of Indian Affairs building in the center of this poverty-stricken, dusty town. An armored personnel carrier rumbled down the main street. Near Oglala, the lawmen kept reporters some 300 yards away from the scene of the shooting as F.B.I. agents investigated the site.

An F.B.I. spokesman here refused to characterize the killings of the two agents as "an ambush."

When questioned why the two agents had apparently approached the farm houses so casually, even though the American Indian Movement had made no secret of its possession of guns and willingness to use them, the spokesman said, "They had no reason to suspect at the time that they'd run into the situation they did."

The presence during the shootout of state highway patrolmen and of William Janklow, the South Dakota Attorney General, also raised questions, because the state authorities have no jurisdiction over Indian reservations.

The F.B.I. spokesman said that he did not know if the state highway patrolmen were deputized by the Federal authorities last night. He said that no highway patrolmen nor national guardsmen remained on the reservation today.

When Mr. Janklow was asked last night whether he had authorization to be on the reservation he replied, "I do not need authorization. Men are being killed."

Pine Ridge, the second largest reservation in the country, has been a focal point of militant Indian unrest ever since the Wounded Knee occupation of 1973. By all accounts, its residents are also among the poorest, most sickly and most socially and psychologically battered of the nation's native Americans.